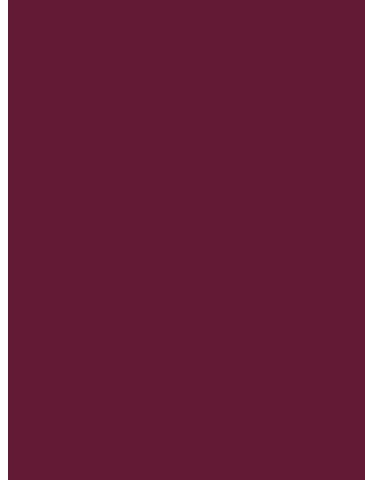




Locker Room Talk by **tellmewhatisreal**

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Max M.

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-11-23 13:31:48

Updated: 2017-11-23 13:31:48

Packaged: 2019-12-17 05:00:22

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,010

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Max gives El a piece of her mind.

Locker Room Talk

Max was sloppily braiding her hair for gym class in the empty locker room when she heard the door open. El appeared from behind the row of lockers and came to a halt when she spotted Max. They shared a look but didn't actually greet each other. El had started school three days ago, and the girls hadn't really spoken to each other in that time, even though they had both hung around with the boys. Max shut her locker door with a loud clang and was headed toward the gym when she noted that El was just standing there, clutching her backpack. Max sighed. "What's wrong?" she asked in an impatient tone.

El looked at her in annoyance. "Nothing," she replied with fake confidence.

"You're gonna be super late for gym class if you don't get a move on. You haven't even changed into your gym clothes yet."

El just gave her a blank stare.

"You have your gym clothes, right?"

"I do," El replied and started to dig through her backpack.

"Find an empty locker for your stuff," Max advised, knowing that she needed guidance even with the most mundane of things. "Here's one," she pointed to the locker to her left.

El shoved her backpack in it and started to change, albeit very slowly. Max was aware that she herself was already late for class, but she sensed there was something off about her. She leaned against the side of the locker, arms crossed.

"Nervous about gym class?"

El glanced at her and sat down on the bench to tie her shoelaces. "Yes."

"Well, you're in luck. I don't think we're playing any team sports today, so your first gym class experience may even be tolerable."

"I'm not worried about that." She stood up and pulled her hair back with a headband. "Mike's not here," she added with a soft voice.

Max had no idea what that had to do with their current situation. "So?"

"Mike helped me in other classes, but he's not here now. So I'm alone."

Max threw her an incredulous look. "You're freaking out because you have to attend one class without your boyfriend?"

Completely missing the accusatory tone in Max's question, she simply nodded.

Max rolled her eyes. "Jesus Christ. From what I've heard, you've literally been to hell and back and also used your superpowers to save the world all by yourself, but you need a boy to hold your hand through gym class?" Her increasingly loud voice reverberated around the locker room.

El was taken aback by the sudden outburst. "Why are you yelling?"

Max wasn't sure whether she should take the easy way out and end the conversation right there, or just power through it and risk being thrown into the wall, or worse. Deciding that she wasn't a coward, she went with the latter. "Okay, you already hate my guts so I have nothing to lose here. You seem to have some sort of a blind spot when it comes to the guys, especially Mike. You think that everything they do is awesome. Hell, you even hate me with a fiery passion because you think I tried to seduce Mike, or whatever, I don't even know. And I get it, they're really fun to hang out with, and you have a thing for Mike. But somehow you've ended up believing that you're too weak to do something without them, and that's bullshit."

The intense look she always got whenever her friends were being offended appeared on El's face. Her hands curled into fists. "I'm not weak," she exclaimed with a raised voice.

"Exactly! That's what I'm saying!" Max threw her hands up in exasperation. El continued to stare at her with narrowed eyes,

looking surprisingly intimidating for someone wearing a hot pink headband.

Max sighed. "Look, all I'm saying is that... they're nice boys. But they treat you like you're this helpless little girl. And you're letting them. You need to stand up for yourself and remind them that you have a mind of your own. Believe me, you don't want anyone dictating your life," she finished quietly and looked down at her feet.

"Why do you want me to be mean to them?" She was looking at Max like she was the worst person on Earth.

"It's not mean, it's self-preservation. Look it up." She meant it literally, since El probably had no idea what the word meant.

The rage was still flashing in El's eyes but she didn't say anything. Max suspected she was too worked up to form a reply.

"Are you going to drop the ceiling on me or something?" she asked after a while.

"I'm not allowed to do that at school."

"You're allowed to do that somewhere else?" she asked incredulously. Not receiving a response, Max finally broke eye contact. "I know I said harsh things, but I'm just looking out for you, like it or not. We're the only girls in the group, we should have each other's backs."

She thought she saw a hint of understanding in El's eyes when the door was suddenly flung open. They both jumped. "Mayfield, Hopper, so sorry to interrupt your gossip session, but maybe you could kindly consider joining us over here? You're missing warm-up!" the teacher shouted from the doorway, her voice booming in the locker room. The door slammed shut with a bang and they were left in silence again.

Max shrugged. "Well, the jumping jacks await." And with that, she headed toward the gym. "You coming?" she asked, holding the door for her.

Now fuelled by anger, El twisted her elastic hair band forcefully around her messy hair and marched into the gym with no trace of

fear. Max followed her, smirking in triumph.